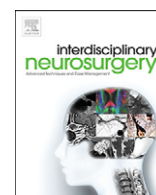


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Technical note: Endoscopic resection of a dermoid cyst anchored to the anterior optic chiasm ☆☆☆



Yuichiro Yoneoka, MD, PhD ^{a,*}, Naoto Watanabe, MD, PhD ^a, Mitsuo Kohno, MD, PhD ^b,
Daisuke Satoh, MD ^b, Hitoshi Takahashi, MD, PhD ^c, Yukihiko Fujii, MD, PhD ^a

^a Department of Neurosurgery, Brain Research Institute, University of Niigata, Niigata, Japan

^b Department of Neurosurgery, Niigata Prefecture, Tokamachi Hospital, Niigata, Japan

^c Department of Pathology, Brain Research Institute, University of Niigata, Niigata, Japan

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Supratentorial dermoid cysts arise due to the misplacement of embryonic inclusions in the vicinity of the developing neural tube up to the third week of life, when the neural groove begins to close. This report describes a case of a suprasellar dermoid cyst anchored to the anterior optic chiasm, which was accurately located by endoscopic observation, removed gross-totally without visual disturbance, and confirmed pathologically. Although the cyst wall was gross-totally resected, the patient's impaired visual field returned to a normal level. The resection procedure under endoscopic vision is demonstrated.

Materials and Methods: A 22-year-old man gradually developed bitemporal hemianopsia with retrobulbar pain over two months. Magnetic resonance imaging demonstrated a suprasellar cyst with intracystic fat contents forming a fluid level within the lesion. The suprasellar cyst was gross-totally removed with endoscopic endonasal transsphenoidal procedures. Intraoperative inspection confirmed that this cyst arose from the optic chiasm. Pathological examination showed the lesion as a dermoid cyst. **Results:** After gross-totally resection of the cyst, the patient presented a further, transient impairment of bitemporal hemianopsia; at four month follow-up, his visual disturbance was not evident any longer. **Conclusion:** To the best of our knowledge, ours is the only case of a dermoid cyst anchored to the anterior optic chiasma, which was visually confirmed under endoscopic observation. After surgery, the patient presented a transient impairment of the visual field, which was not evident at four month follow-up. It will contribute to a similar case, in which surgeons hesitate to make an incision in the optic chiasm. A subtotal excision should be considered in cases of dermoid cysts anchored to the anterior optic chiasm, because all the previously reported cases of suprasellar dermoid cysts are young people or those who have a relatively long life expectancy.

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Introduction

Dermoid cysts are rare tumors, constituting less than 1% of intracranial tumors. They are benign congenital tumors originating from ectopic inclusion of epithelial cells during closure of the neural tube in the third to fifth week of embryonic development [1–3].

Intracranial dermoid cysts are well circumscribed and most often occur in the parasellar region, sylvian fissure, cerebellopontine angle, posterior fossa, and fourth ventricle [4–6]. Patients with dermoid cysts usually present with symptoms related to a local mass effect, seizures, or recurrent meningitis.

This report describes a case of a suprasellar dermoid cyst anchored to the anterior optic chiasm, which was located by endoscopic observation, removed gross-totally, and confirmed pathologically. To the best of our knowledge, ours is the only case of an intracranial dermoid cyst anchored to the anterior optic chiasma. Although the cyst wall was gross-totally resected, the patient's impaired visual field returned to a normal level. The resected procedure under endoscopic vision is demonstrated in this

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* Corresponding author. Department of Neurosurgery, Brain Research Institute, University of Niigata, 1-757 Asahimachi-dori Chuo-ku Niigata 951-8585 Japan. Tel.: +81 25 227 0653; fax: +81 25 227 0819.

E-mail address: yone@bri.niigata-u.ac.jp (Y. Yoneoka).

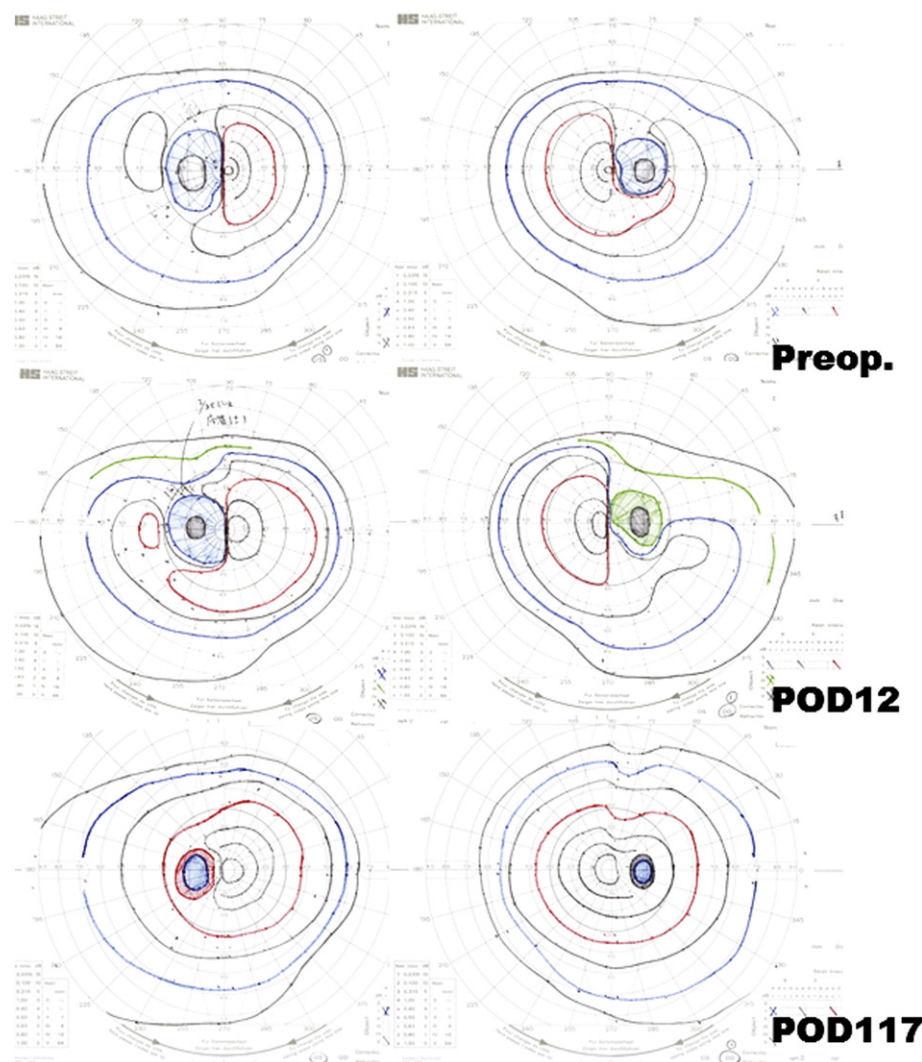


Fig. 1. Goldmann perimeter (GP) reveals bitemporal hemianopia (upper), which is aggravated transiently after the resection of the cyst (middle). The bitemporal hemianopia has disappeared, which is confirmed with GP (lower), four months after surgery.

case report. It will contribute to a similar case, in which surgeons hesitate to make an incision on the optic chiasm.

Case presentation

A 22-year-old man, with a history of intermittent retrobulbar pain for two years, gradually developed left-eye dominant visual disturbance over two months. Ophthalmological examination revealed bitemporal hemianopia (Fig. 1, upper). Magnetic resonance (MR) imaging demonstrated a suprasellar cyst with intracystic fat contents forming a fluid level, indicating the lesion as a dermoid cyst (Fig. 2, B, C, E, F). Computed tomography (CT) showed no calcification of the lesion (Fig. 2A and D). The patient underwent endoscopic endonasal transsphenoidal removal of the cyst for optic pathway decompression and for histopathological diagnosis of the lesion. The cyst was the same in color as the optic nerve/chiasm and well-demarcated from the surrounding structures, such as the pituitary, the anterior cerebral arteries, or the basal frontal lobes, except for the anterior optic pathway. The cyst contents obtained by needle puncture were creamy white emulsive fluids. Aspiration of the cyst contents enabled observation of

the attachment site of the cystic lesion on the anterior optic chiasm. The cyst wall seamlessly continued to the optic chiasm and to the optic nerves bilaterally, which was visually confirmed under high-definition endoscopic vision. The pituitary stalk was intact and not affected by the lesion (Figs. 3F and 4B). Only the wall of the collapsed suprasellar cyst was gross-totally removed with endoscopic procedures with great care. Pathologically, the removed tissue was diagnosed as dermoid cyst, being lined by squamous epithelium and endowed with skin appendages, including pilosebaceous units; marked lymphocytic (T-cell-dominant) infiltration was evident (Fig. 5).

Postoperative course was uneventful. Postoperative examination showed that the gross total resection transiently aggravated the patient's visual field disturbance (Fig. 1, middle), which almost recovered in four months (Fig. 1, lower). He did not experience postoperative meningitis or hypopituitarism including diabetes insipidus. The patient was discharged with sufficient pituitary reserve. Postoperative MR imaging showed no residual lesion (Fig. 6). The patient has been closely monitored for relapse of dermoid or as a component of immature teratoma. He has remained free of recurrence at one-year follow-up.

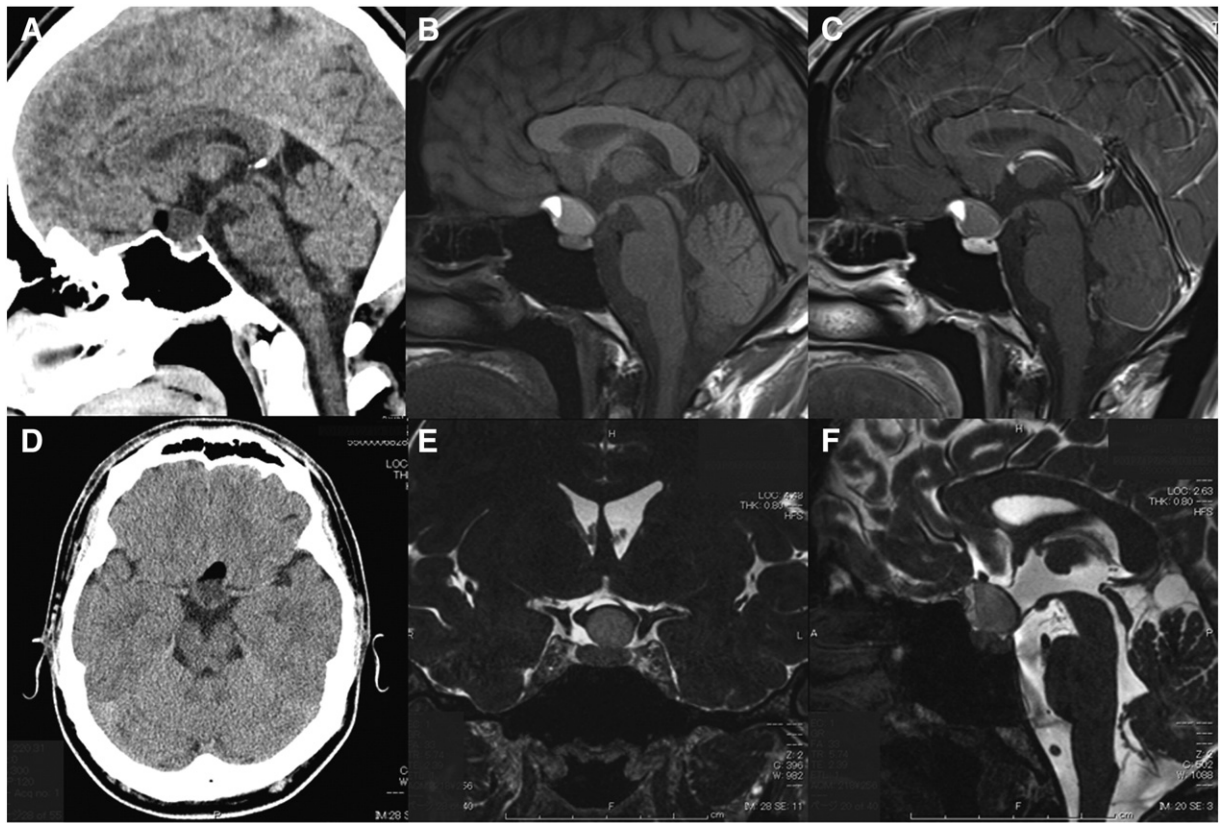


Fig. 2. Computed tomography shows a suprasellar lesion containing a very low-density component and a relatively low-density component (A, D). A fluid level exists between them in this cystic lesion (D). T1-weighted image shows a high-signal intensity component in the cyst corresponding to internal fat content. This cystic lesion is not enhanced after the administration of gadolinium contrast. T2-weighted images show the displaced optic chiasm by the cystic lesion. The pituitary gland is observed independently from the cyst.

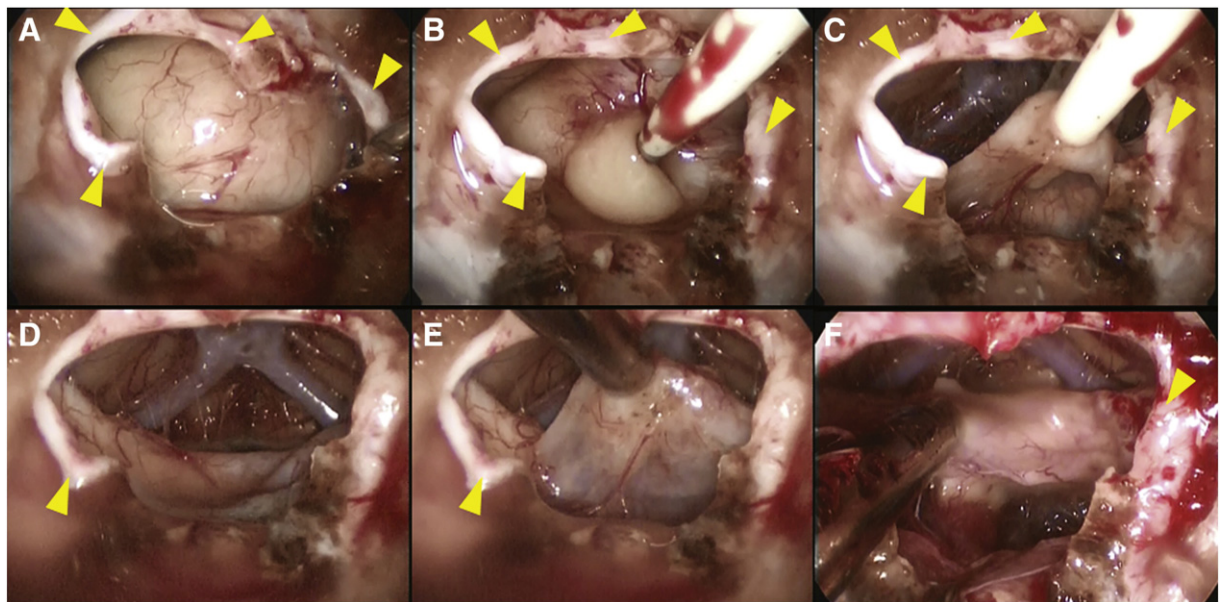


Fig. 3. The dura (arrow head) under the tuberculum sellae is opened and the cyst can be seen through the dural opening. The cyst is the same in color as the optic nerve/chiasm (A). The cyst contents obtained by needle puncture are creamy white emulsive fluids (B). Aspiration of the cyst contents enables observation of the attachment site of the cystic lesion on the anterior optic chiasm (C). The cyst wall is well-demarcated from the surrounding structures, such as the pituitary, the anterior cerebral arteries, or the basal frontal lobes, except for the anterior optic pathway (D, E). The anterior aspect of the optic chiasm can be seen through the cyst wall (C, D). The cyst wall seamlessly continued to the optic chiasm and the optic nerves bilaterally, which was visually confirmed under high-definition endoscopic vision (E). The pituitary stalk was intact and not affected by the lesion (F), which was confirmed after resection of the cyst wall.

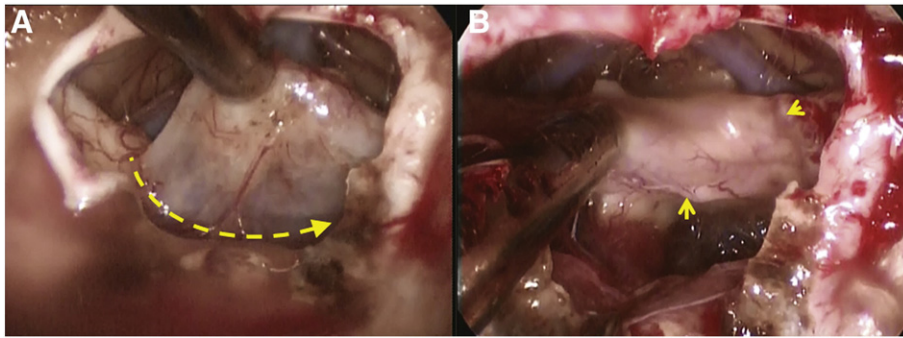


Fig. 4. The cyst wall was resected along the optic chiasm (A, broken arrow). The part of the cyst wall on the optic chiasm was left (B). Arrow heads show the edge of the resected cyst wall (B).

Discussion

Dermoid cysts, also known as dermoid tumors or ectodermal inclusion cysts are benign congenital inclusion cysts that account for 0.3% of all brain tumors [4–6]. Intracranial dermoid cysts are well circumscribed and most often occur in the parasellar region, sylvian fissure, cerebellopontine angle, posterior fossa, and fourth ventricle [4–6]. Patients with dermoid cysts usually present with symptoms related to a local mass effect, seizures, or recurrent meningitis. The mean age of presentation of patients with intracranial dermoid cysts is 15 years [5], although some authors have reported that patients commonly present in the third or fourth decades of life [6,7].

Supratentorial dermoid cysts are usually located in the suprasellar, parasellar, temporal, and frontobasal regions [8]. Although several cases of suprasellar dermoid cysts are available from previous reports [9–18], no other case of a dermoid cyst anchored to the optic chiasm has been published to date to the best of our knowledge. HD endoscopic observation clearly demonstrated that the suprasellar cystic lesion originated from the anterior optic chiasm. The base of the cyst existed beneath the vessels running on the optic chiasm or the optic nerves. Only the cyst wall was carefully resected with fine scissors.

Yasargil et al., in their landmark series of 43 operated patients with dermoids and epidermoids, reported meningitis and transient cranial nerve palsies as the most common postoperative compli-

cations [19]. They state the removal of the capsule itself may be hazardous and increases the morbidity, with no practical benefit for the patient. In fact, the dermoid cyst existed under the fine vasculatures on the optic nerve/chiasm, which indicates the long coexistence of the dermoid and the optic pathway (Figs. 3 and 4). Controversy exists regarding the total removal of complicated and risky lesions, but a subtotal excision should be considered in these cases due to the low recurrence reported even after subtotal excision [19,20].

Although the cyst wall was gross-totally resected, the patient's impaired visual field returned to a normal level. A subtotal excision should be considered in cases of dermoid cysts anchored to the anterior optic chiasm, because all the previously reported cases of suprasellar dermoid cysts are young people or those who have a relatively long life expectancy.

For "microsurgical" resection of the suprasellar cystic lesions under endoscopic vision, as in our case, we recommend the use of a high-definition (HD) endoscopic camera system. HD systems provide high quality images and enable surgeons to differentiate the tumoral tissue from the normal structures during surgery. The resection procedure under endoscopic vision, which is demonstrated in this report, will contribute to treatment of a similar case, in which surgeons hesitate to make an incision on the optic chiasm.

Conclusion

Since gross total resection of a suprasellar dermoid cyst anchored to the anterior optic chiasm hardly aggravated visual disturbance of our patient, a subtotal excision should be considered in this rare clinical entity. Careful observation under an HD endoscopic camera system increases the accuracy of the resection of pathological tissue.

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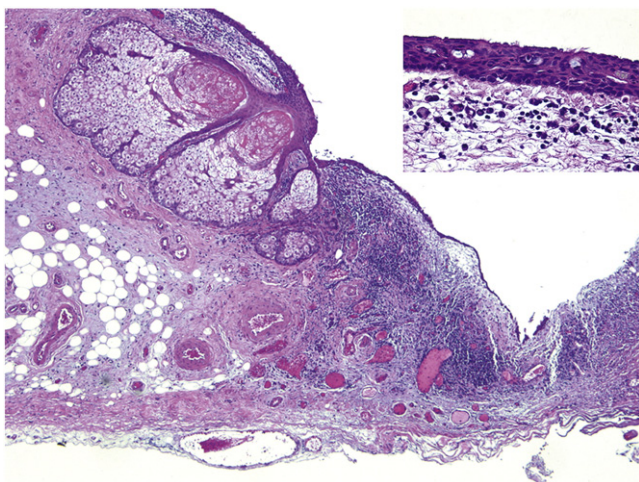


Fig. 5. Microscopic specimen of the cyst is compatible with dermoid cyst that is lined by squamous epithelium and endowed with skin appendages, including pilosebaceous units; marked lymphocytic (T-cell-dominant) infiltration is evident.

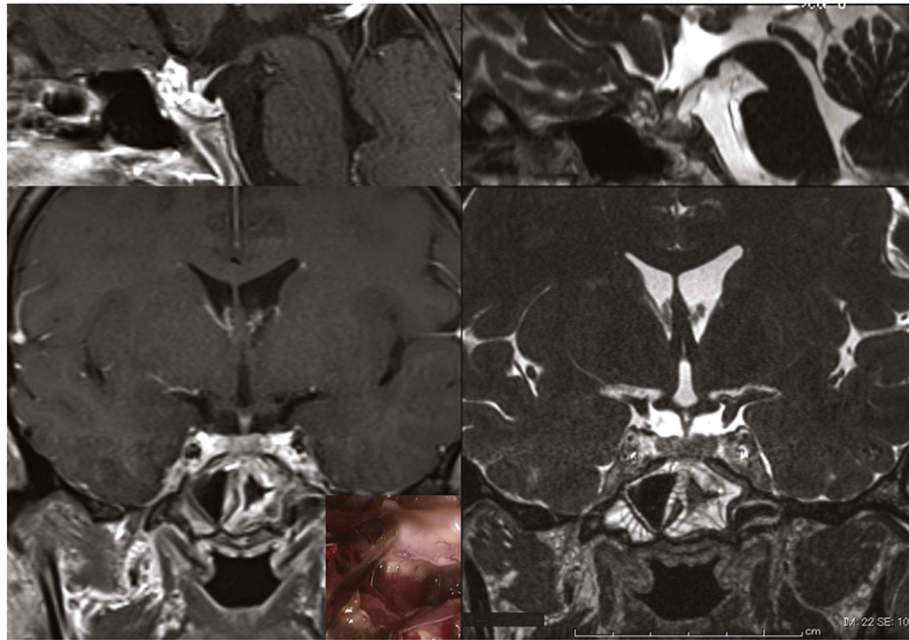


Fig. 6. Follow-up MR imaging shows no residual lesion or no recurrence six months after surgery. The pituitary stalk has returned to the normal position. Note the enhanced region and the less-enhanced region in the pituitary stalk, which are compatible with the intraoperative findings.

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